

## RAT CONTROL ON TEXAS FARMS

Prepared by:

Rodent Control Division, U. S. Fish  
and Wildlife Service, and Texas A. and M.  
College Extension Service Cooperating

### 1. *Find out what kind of rats you have.*

If your farm is infested with rats you may have either the *common* or *Norway rat*, the *roof* or *Alexandria rat*, or you may have both. The Norway rat lives mostly on the ground under buildings, heaps of rubbish and trash, or in burrows. The Alexandria rat lives mostly in attics, lofts, under roofs and eaves, and in double walls.

Both kinds of rats feed and water wherever food and water are available. One can usually tell Norway rats are around by their burrows or seeing the rats as they run out from under trash piles. The Alexandria rat gives itself away by making dark smudges around rafters, pipes, sills, etc., where these are obstacles in the rats' pathway.



### 2. *Poison as a means of control.*

While rats may be controlled by gassing, by trapping and other methods, the most satisfactory results can usually be secured through the use of poison. *Red squill* is by far the safest poison available and will give excellent results when properly used. Most reputable brands of red squill have a statement of 'guaranteed toxicity' on the label. If you wish to use the more toxic poisons such as *compound 1080*, *thallium*, etc., it is recommended that you consult a reputable pest control operator, your county agent, or a representative of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Don't try to use such dangerous poisons yourself but call in someone experienced in their use.

### 3. *Directions for poisoning with red squill.*

Red squill should be mixed with bait in the proportion of one part squill to nine parts bait material. Bait materials which have given excellent results are: (1) One part cracklings mixed with three parts oatmeal, (2) Fresh, lean ground meat, (3) Cubed apples, tomatoes, cantaloupes, etc., used together or separately. It is important that more than one type of bait be used.

Before you put out the bait you should first find out where rats are living, watering and feeding. When you have located these points put out poison baits along the walls, on sills, and other protected places between the refuge and watering or feeding places. If the rat's refuge and its food are in the same place, as for instance a corn crib, the problem of control is

difficult and the best solution is to expose poison baits between this site and the nearest watering point. Put out more baits than you believe to be necessary. Many small baits are better than a few large ones. Do not put out a few baits each day but cover your place thoroughly with one application and then do not use any more squill baits for at least two weeks.

After bait has been exposed for three or four days what is left should be picked up and burned. Dead rats should be burned or buried when found.

#### *4. Work to be done after use of poison.*

After you have reduced or removed your original rat infestation you should take steps to prevent reinfestation. You may do this by eliminating their refuges, by burning and destroying all piles of trash and rubbish, stacks of brush, etc. Put your feed concentrates in a rat proof barrel or bin or wire cage. Watch for reinfestations and poison rats which come in. Clean up your premises. Good housekeeping, neatness, protected storage of feed concentrates, are all discouraging to rats.

*For additional information on rat control consult your county agent or the nearest representative of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

Issued by  
The Extension Service  
Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and  
The United States Department of Agriculture  
Ide P. Trotter, Director, College Station, Texas